

Statistics Weekly

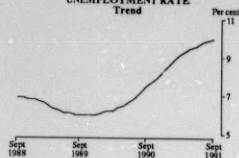
Thursday, 17 October 1991

The week in statistics ...

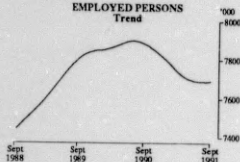
- Unemployment rate tops 10% 2
- Award rates of pay in brief ... 2
- Behind the numbers — some facts about the labour force survey 3
- Retailers consolidate their turnover gains 4
- Small businesses in profile 5
- Friendly societies in brief ... 5
- All the week's releases 6
- Calendar of key releases up to 29 October 7
- The latest ...
 - key State indicators 7
 - key national indicators 8

statistics

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE
Trend



EMPLOYED PERSONS
Trend



Unemployment rate tops 10%

The unemployment rate in September 1991 (seasonally adjusted) rose by 0.4 percentage points to 10.2 per cent, the highest rate recorded by the labour force survey since September 1983. Unemployment also rose in September 1991. In contrast, employment fell following the large rise in August 1991, while the labour force participation rate remained steady.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of employed persons fell by 23,400 in September 1991 to 7,705,200, with a fall of 29,700 in full-time employment partly offset by an increase of 6,300 in part-time employment. Male employment fell by 10,200 mainly due to a fall of 8,800 in full-time employment. Female employment fell by 13,200, with a fall of 20,800 in full-time employment outweighing the increase of 7,600 in part-time employment.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of unemployed persons increased by 31,600 to 872,100 in September 1991. The main component of this increase was a rise of 19,300 in the number of females seeking full-time work. There were also small increases in the number of females seeking part-time work, and male full-time and part-time unemployment.

For males, the unemployment rate was 10.5 per cent. The unemployment rate for females rose by 0.7 percentage points to 9.8 per cent.

The seasonally adjusted estimate of the labour force participation rate for September 1991 was unchanged at 63.4 per cent. The participation rates for males (74.7%) and females (52.3%) were relatively steady.

LABOUR FORCE SURVEY ESTIMATES
Seasonally adjusted

	Employed			Un- employed	Unemployment rate	Participa- tion rate
	Full-time workers	Part-time workers	Total			
	— 000 —					
1991 —					— per cent —	
May	6,001.9	1,713.1	7,715.0	603.6	9.4	63.2
June	5,985.6	1,720.2	7,705.7	793.0	9.3	63.0
July	5,919.5	1,703.0	7,622.6	831.9	9.8	62.6
August	6,006.1	1,722.5	7,728.6	840.5	9.8	63.4
September	5,976.4	1,728.8	7,705.2	872.1	10.2	63.4

For further information, order the publication *The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0), or contact Don Clark on (06) 252 6525.

Award rates of pay in brief ...

Over the twelve months to August 1991, the weekly award rates of pay index for full-time adult employees rose by 2.2 per cent. For full-time adult males and full-time adult females the indexes rose by 2.0 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively. In terms of occupation groups, the largest increases for full-time adult males and females were for salespersons and personal service workers (3.3% and 3.4% respectively), and for para-professionals (2.4% and 2.9% respectively).

Source: *Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia, August 1991* (6312.0).

Behind the numbers — some facts about the labour force survey

The Monthly Labour Force Survey is by far the largest household survey conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

Each month the survey records information from more than 70,000 individuals, using a random sample of about 31,000 private dwellings and a (much smaller) number of other dwellings such as hotels, motels and caravan parks.

The sheer size of this monthly exercise yields several advantages, not least of which is a high degree of statistical accuracy. In April 1991, for instance, when the ABS estimate of employed persons was 7.75 million, there was a 95 per cent probability that the true number of employed people in Australia was within just 45,600 of that number.

Such low 'standard errors' clearly indicate that, taking one month with another, the survey reliably reflects national labour market levels, movements and trends.

The Labour Force Survey is also an extremely useful vehicle for collecting data on a wide range of social and economic topics related to the labour market.

In 1991, supplementary topics surveyed along with the core questions included labour force experience, transition from education to work, superannuation and a profile of people who have left the workforce.

The basic labour force data are published in preliminary form fourteen working days after the completion of interviewing, while the results of the supplementary surveys are normally released some months afterwards.

The survey is conducted by specially trained interviewers, generally in the two weeks beginning on the Monday between the 6th and 12th of each month. The information obtained relates to the week before the interview (the 'reference week'), and the labour force category to which a person is assigned depends on his or her actual activity during that week.

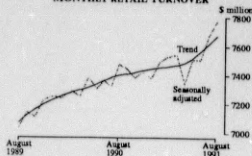
The survey is designed to enable analysis of the labour force by a number of variables, including sex, age, birthplace, occupation, hours worked and so on. While some of these data are included in the monthly publications, much more detailed information is available from ABS offices in the form of standard and special tabulations and microfiche.

A more comprehensive description of the labour force survey, together with answers to some of the questions most commonly asked about employment and unemployment statistics, may be found in the new ABS Information Paper: *Measuring Employment and Unemployment* (6279.0), issued on 22 August, 1991.

For further information about the labour force survey or the availability of labour force data products and services, contact Joan Neville on Canberra (06) 252 6565, or any ABS State office.

Retailers consolidate their turnover gains

MONTHLY RETAIL TURNOVER



Turnover of retail and selected service industries rose by 1.4 per cent seasonally adjusted in August 1991. This was the third strong rise in the seasonally adjusted estimate in the last four months.

Growth in the trend estimates of turnover continues to show improvement. The increase over the three months ended August 1991 averaged 0.7 per cent per month. The average monthly increase for the previous three months (ended May 1991) was 0.2 per cent per month. This strengthening of the growth rate continues the upturn in the trend series that commenced in April 1991.

The annual growth rate (August 1991 over August 1990) has risen to 3.7 per cent, an average monthly increase of 0.3 per cent.

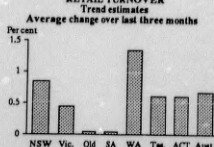
Grocers and department stores are showing improved trading with average monthly increases over the last three months of 0.9 per cent and 1.0 per cent respectively. Pharmacies continue to show strong growth while clothing stores are showing moderate growth.

Of the major retail and selected service industries only the hotels, liquor stores and licensed clubs industry is showing a decline with the trend series falling by an average of 0.1 per cent over the three months ended August 1991. In fact when the selected service industries are excluded from calculations, the resultant retail only turnover has shown trend growth averaging 0.9 per cent in the three months to August and totalling 5.5 per cent in the year to August.

RETAIL AND SELECTED SERVICE INDUSTRIES TURNOVER

	Original value in August 1991 \$ million	Percentage change in trend estimates	
		Average monthly increase for 3 months to August 1991	August 1991 over August 1990
Grocers, confectioners, tobacconists	2,311	0.9	8.6
Hotels, liquor stores, licensed clubs	951	-0.1	-2.5
Department and general stores	763	1.0	1.8
Clothing and fabrics stores	529	0.3	4.5
Other food stores	510	0.8	4.2
Electrical stores	435	0.3	-3.0
Pharmacies	373	2.9	21.2
Newsagents	260	0.6	1.1
Other industries	1,449	n.a.	n.a.
All industries	7,578	0.7	3.7

RETAIL TURNOVER



The trend estimates of turnover for retail and selected service establishments show strong growth in New South Wales and Western Australia, while Victoria, Tasmania and the Australian Capital Territory are showing weak to moderate growth. Queensland and South Australia are experiencing very weak growth.

Small businesses in profile

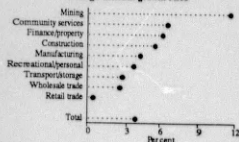
Nearly 800,000 small businesses were operating in Australia in 1989-90 comprising 95 per cent of the nation's 844,000 business enterprises. Excluding the agriculture sector, there were 693,000 small businesses involving more than 2.5 million people or 34 per cent of Australia's total employment.

The data are contained in the second edition of the ABS publication, *Small Business in Australia 1990*. Broadly, small businesses are defined in the publication as those which employ less than 20 people in non-manufacturing industries or less than 100 in manufacturing.

The publication gives a detailed picture of small businesses at national, state and industry levels, and provides a wide range of other statistics including those on very small businesses, bankruptcy and labour costs.

The data shows there were 148,000 small businesses in the retail industry, 137,000 in construction, 110,000 in finance, property and business services and 106,000 in the agriculture industry.

SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES
Average annual growth rate



SMALL BUSINESS ENTERPRISES, PRIVATE SECTOR GROWTH
Percentage

Industry division	Annual average growth		Growth
	1983-84 to 1988-89	1983-84 to 1989-90	1988-89 to 1989-90
Goods producing —			
Manufacturing	4.6	4.2	2.3
Construction	5.4	5.6	6.6
Other	13.2	11.3	2.8
Total goods producing	5.2	5.2	5.2
Services producing —			
Retail trade	1.4	0.5	-3.8
Finance, property and other business services	7.1	6.3	2.7
Recreational, personal and other services	5.4	3.6	-4.9
Other	4.3	4.0	2.8
Total services producing	4.1	3.3	-0.5
Total private sector	4.4	3.8	1.1

The statistics show that the number of small non-agricultural private sector businesses increased by 25 per cent between 1983-84 and 1989-90 at an average annual growth rate of 3.8 per cent. However, between 1988-89 and 1989-90 the growth rate was only 1.1 per cent.

For further information, order the publication *Small Business in Australia 1990* (1321.0), or contact Clem Tozer on (06) 252 6726.

Friendly societies in brief ...

At the end of the June quarter 1991 the value of total assets of friendly societies was \$7,329 million, an increase for the quarter of 2.5 per cent.

Source: *Assets and Liabilities of Friendly Societies: Australia, June Quarter 1991* (5660.0).

Inquiries

The ABS supplies a wide range of statistical information:

- ☐ through its bookshops
- ☐ by mail order
(including subscription)
- ☐ by facsimile
- ☐ electronically.

To order any of the publications that appear in *Statistics Weekly* or to inquire about the statistics and services available from the ABS, contact Information Services at any of the offices listed below. An Information Consultancy Service in each office provides assistance of a more extensive or complex nature.

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Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

Robert Nixon
Editor
Statistics Weekly
(06) 252 6104

Statistics Weekly
17 October 1991

All the week's releases: 9 to 15 October

General

Publications Issued in September 1991 (1102.0; \$5.50)
Publications Advice, 11 October 1991 (1105.0; free)
Publications Advice, 15 October 1991 (1105.0; free)
Statistics Weekly, 10 October 1991 (1318.0; \$4.00)
Economic Indicators, Vic., September 1991 (1307.2; \$6.00)
Northern Territory Business Indicators, September 1991 (1307.7; \$4.00)
Australian Standard Geographical Classifications (ASGC) January 1991 (1216.0; \$75.00)

Demography

Estimated Resident Population by Age and Sex in Statistical Local Areas, Vic., June 1990 (3207.2; \$12.50)
Age and Sex Distribution of Estimated Resident Population, Qld — Data on Floppy Disk — Technical Details and Explanatory Notes, June 1990 (3217.3; \$80.00)

National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Foreign Investment, Aust.: An Outline of Concepts, Sources and Methods, 1989 (5355.0; \$20.00) — *new issue*
Assets and Liabilities of Friendly Societies, Aust., June Qtr 1991 (5660.0; \$10.00)
Consumer Credit, Qld, October 1990 (5670.3; \$8.50) — *new issue*

Labour statistics and prices

The Labour Force, Aust., September 1991, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.00)
The Labour Force, Aust. — Preliminary Data on Floppy Disk, September 1991 (6271.0; \$65.00)
Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Aust., August 1991 (6312.0; \$10.00)
Price Indexes of Copper Materials, Aust., September 1991 (6410.0; \$5.00)

Secondary industry and distribution

Retail Trade, Aust., August 1991 (8501.0; \$10.00)
Building Approvals, NSW, August 1991 (8731.1; \$10.00)
Building Approvals, Qld, August 1991 (8731.3; \$10.00)
Dwelling Unit Commencements: Small Area Statistics, Qld, 1990-91 (8743.3; \$10.00)
Building Activity, SA, June Qtr 1991 (8752.4; \$10.00)
Building Approvals, Tas., August 1991 (8731.6; \$9.50)

Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Aust., July 1991 (9303.0; \$10.00)
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Qld, August 1991 (9303.3; \$10.00)
Motor Vehicle Registrations, Tas., August 1991 (9302.5; \$5.00)

Calendar of key releases

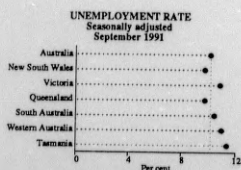
Expected releases over the fortnight to 29 October 1991

October

- 22** Export Price Index, Australia, August 1991 (6405.0; \$7.50)
- 24** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, August 1991 (5609.0; \$10.00)
- 25** Price Index of Materials Used in Building Other Than House Building, Eight Capital Cities, August 1991 (6407.0; \$10.00)
- 28** Price Index of Materials Used in House Building, Six State Capital Cities and Canberra, August 1991 (6408.0; \$7.50)
 Price Indexes of Materials Used in Manufacturing Industries, Australia, August 1991 (6411.0; \$10.00)
 Manufacturing Production, Australia, September 1991, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.00)
 Registrations of New Motor Vehicles, Australia, September 1991, Preliminary (9301; \$10.00)

The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to
15 October 1991



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Mar. qtr 91)*	-8.4	-22.7	0	-8.9	-7.0	-16.9	n.a.	n.a.	-10.2
Retail turnover (Aug. 91) (trend estimate)	4.3	1.7	2.9	5.4	5.0	5.0	n.a.	9.6	3.7
New motor vehicle registrations (Aug. 91)† (a)	-3.1	-22.3	-11.2	-25.4	-15.3	-28.0	-27.9	19.3	-12.4
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Aug. 91)	8.6	-6.8	7.6	3.1	19.6	41.3	21.7	36.5	7.6
Value of total building work done (Mar. qtr 91)	0.8	-30.2	-19.5	2.7	-23.2	-18.8	33.5	-4.2	-13.5
Employed persons (Sept. 91)*	-1.7	-3.8	-0.6	-2.6	-1.5	-1.9	1.9	1.0	-2.1
Capital city consumer price index (June qtr 91)	2.8	4.1	3.4	4.7	2.2	3.8	4.1	3.2	3.4
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (May 91)	3.6	5.2	5.7	6.5	8.1	3.1	5.8	5.6	5.0
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc (Mar. qtr 91)	0.0	-1.9	-0.9	-6.4	-1.2	7.7	0.2	14.5	-0.5

* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.
(a) Refer to footnote (e) on next page.

Key national indicators – consolidated to 15 October 1991

				Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on	
				Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year
Period							
National production							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	June qtr 91	92,362	93,956	-1.2	-1.2
	— 1984-85 prices			62,148	63,912	-1.0	-2.4
Industrial activity							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	June qtr 91	6,304	6,011	-8.9	-13.4
	— 1984-85 prices			4,808	4,577	-8.2	-13.4
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Six months to Dec. 91	12,756	n.a.	n.a.	-18.5
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	Aug. 91	7,577.9	7,778.7	1.4	4.0
	— 1984-85 prices		June qtr 91	14,569.4	15,058.0	-1.0	-2.2
New motor vehicle registrations (e)		no.	August 91	42,400	42,227	-1.3	-12.4
Dwelling unit approvals			August 91	12,287	11,883	1.2	10.2
Value of all building approvals		\$m		1,789	1,700	-14.5	-8.4
Value of total building work done	— current prices (f)	"	Mar. qtr 91	6,021	6,653	-5.1	-12.0
	— 1984-85 prices (f)			3,789	4,112	-6.9	-15.0
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"	June qtr 91	33,638	33,765	-1.7	-3.7
	— 1984-85 prices			23,225	23,337	-1.8	-3.0
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to Dec. 91	71,691	n.a.	n.a.	-5.0
Labour							
Employed persons		'000	Sept. 91	7,762.8	7,705.2	-0.3	-2.1
Unemployment rate †		%	"	10.0	10.2	0.4	2.7
Participation rate †		"	"	63.7	63.4	0.0	-0.5
Job vacancies		'000	Aug. 91	25.6	25.1	-2.1	-46.9
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours	"	1.07	1.11	-1.0	-12.2
Prices, profits and wages							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0		June qtr 91	214.4	n.a.	0.1	3.4
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		July 91	120.4	n.a.	0.0	3.4
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0		July 91	111.4	n.a.	0.2	2.6
Company profits before income tax		\$m	June qtr 91	2,469	2,697	7.4	-23.1
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)		\$	May 91	560.80	n.a.	-0.6	5.0
Interest rates (b) (monthly average)							
90-day bank bills †		% per annum	August 91	10.20	n.a.	0.10	-3.55
10-year Treasury bonds †				10.65	n.a.	-0.35	-2.85
Balance of payments							
Exports of merchandise		\$m	August 91	4,601	4,665	1.4	13.6
Imports of merchandise		"	"	3,937.9	3,715	-12.3	-10.2
Balance on merchandise trade (c)		"	"	622	950	160.3	n.a.
Balance of goods and services (c)		"	"	304	696	1,165.5	n.a.
Balance on current account (e)		"	"	-925	-575	47.0	60.5
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0		June qtr 91	n.a.	100.2	1.2	-5.2
Foreign investment							
Net foreign debt		\$m	30 June 91	130,314	n.a.	-2.4	2.9
Net foreign liabilities				176,625	n.a.	1.6	6.6
Exchange rates (monthly average)							
US\$	per \$A		August 91	0.7824	n.a.	1.5	-3.3
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0			60.4	n.a.	0.7	-1.6
Other indicators							
Population (resident at end of qtr)		million	Mar. 91	17.3	n.a.	0.4	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals		'000	May 91	161	204	10.8	6.4

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) August 1991 is not strictly comparable with August 1990 due to the introduction by motor vehicle registration authorities of a more accurate identification and classification system. (f) Later figures expected to be released Wednesday, 16 October 1991.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.
 Figures have been taken from a variety of ABS publications. Copies may be obtained from Information Services (see page 6).
 Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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